



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill  
Middle District of Florida

Tampa

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: STEVE COLE

PHONE: (813) 274-6136

FAX: (813) 274-6300

## **ORLANDO MOTEL SECURITY GUARD SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 17 YEARS IN PRISON ON FEDERAL FIREARMS AND BODY ARMOR CHARGES**

Orlando, Florida - Chief United States District Judge Patricia C. Fawsett today sentenced TROY NOLAN HARKNESS, age 39, of Orlando, Florida, to 17 and-a-half years' imprisonment on federal criminal charges of possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon and possession of body armor by a violent felon. In addition to the prison term, HARKNESS must pay a \$5,000 fine and serve three years supervised release at the conclusion of his incarceration. HARKNESS earlier had been found guilty of the charges at the conclusion of a jury trial on May 1, 2007.

According to the evidence presented at trial, on October 2, 2006, officers from the Orlando Police Department approached HARKNESS at a local motel where he worked as a security guard. HARKNESS, dressed in a security uniform with handcuffs and an asp baton, was armed with several knives, a pellet gun resembling a semi-automatic pistol, and an electric stun device (taser). Further investigation revealed that Harkness was a multiple convicted felon and unable to possess the taser under state law. After his arrest for the taser, however, officers discovered that HARKNESS also was wearing a bullet-proof vest under multiple layers of clothing. In addition, HARKNESS had concealed a loaded semi-automatic handgun in his underwear. Since HARKNESS previously has been convicted of a violent felony, he is prohibited under federal law from possessing either firearms,

ammunition or body armor.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Orange County, the City of Orlando Police Department, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"). This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from ATF. United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr., and Special Assistant United States Attorney Kelly Jo Heiser.